



# United States Department of the Interior

CALIFORNIA/NEVADA OPERATIONS OFFICE  
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In Response Reply To:  
CNO-ES

JUN 23 2006

## Memorandum

To: CNO ES Project Leaders

From: **Acting** CNO Manager

Subject: Fire Season Coordination with Land Management Agencies and Local Fire Authorities

We are now entering the 2006 fire season. While it will hopefully be an uneventful season, on-the-ground conditions throughout the western United States are not good this summer. We must be prepared for another challenging season.

To ensure maximum levels of preparedness, I want you and your staffs to take the following steps immediately:

1. Establish or renew regular communications with your local Forest Supervisors, BLM Area Managers, Tribes, California Department of Forestry, county officials, and other land management agency counterparts that deal with fire management.
2. Let them know that each of your offices is prepared to assist and expeditiously process consultations on fuel-reduction projects, and that fire emergency preparedness is your highest priority this summer.
3. Designate a lead staff person in your office to make sure that proper coordination is carried out as described above. This person will give periodic updates in writing (e-mail is acceptable) on a monthly basis describing your office's implementation of the above direction. Please send these reports to Darrin Thome in the CNO office.
4. Be sure to consider utilization of consultation funds available through the National Fire Plan, and make use of these funds as necessary to support staff working on this issue.

Through the new Counterpart Regulations, the Forest Service and BLM now have the ability to complete informal consultation on their own fire projects. If these agencies have questions or need help with this process, I expect your offices to coordinate and assist expeditiously.

Finally, remember that firefighter and public safety is our first priority in this consultation process. In emergency situations where listed species are involved, we will follow any programmatic guidelines you have put in place or, where appropriate, the emergency consultation process as detailed in the Section 7 Handbook. But we need to make sure there are no miscommunications, and that fire responders do not perceive a need to delay emergency responses while waiting to address listed species issues.

At the next Project Leader conference call we can discuss fire management issues and to share various approaches and insight. In the meantime, thank you for your prompt response to this direction.